

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 09616 181012Z

11

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

SS-15 NSC-10 AGR-20 EUR-25 FMC-04 RSR-01 /136 W

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R 180940Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6241

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THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM BOMBAY SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO
CLACUTTA MADRAS DTD 17 AUG IS RPTD YOUR STA:

QUOTE

BOMBAY 1624

E. O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, IN

SUBJ: CONTINUING BOYCOTT SHIPMENTS OF ESSENTIAL FOOD

COMMODITIES BY BOMBAY PORT TRUST EMPLOYEES UNION

FOR LABOR COUNSELOR

1. BOYCOTT SOVIET FREIGHTER SALVAT CONTINUING AS OF
AUGUST 17. BOYCOTT COMMENCED AUGUST 2 AS RESPONSE
ANNOUNCEMENT BY ALL INDIA PORT AND DOCK WORKERS FEDERATION
(AIPDWF) PRESIDENT S. R. KULKARNI THAT HIGH QUALITY RICE
AND PEANUT CARGO DESTINED FOR SALVAT WOULD NOT BE LOADED
DUE ACUTE SHORTAGE ESSENTIAL FOOD COMMODITIES INDIA.
KULKARNI ALSO HEADS AIPDWF'S LARGEST AFFILIATE UNION, THE
TRANSPORT AND DOCK WORKERS UNION (TDWU). ON AUGUST 3,
BOMBAY PORT TRUST EMPLOYEES UNION (BPTU), SECOND LARGEST
AIPDWF AFFILIATE, ISSUED ITS OWN PRESS RELEASE REINFORCING
KULKARNI'S ANNOUNCEMENT. PRESS RELEASE PINPOINTED SCARCITY
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EDIBLE OIL BOMBAY AREA AND CLAIMED 2,400 TONS OF PEANUTS

SCHEDULED FOR SALVAT LOADING WILL PRODUCE 10,000 TONS EDIBLE OIL FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION. RELEASE ALSO QUOTED BPTEU TELEGRAM SENT TO GOI MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE, URGING GOI TO QUOTE IMMEDIATELY BAN THE EXPORT OF GROUNDNUTS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES UNQUOTE, AND ANNOUNCED THAT QUOTE THE BOYCOTT WILL CONTINUE TILL THE UNION GOVERNMENT ISSUES ORDERS BANNING THE EXPORTS OF SUCH COMMODITIES SO ESSENTIAL TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY UNQUOTE.

2. SALVAT WAS TO TAKE ON PORTION OF 7,000 M. TONS OF RICE CONTRACTED IN JULY 1973 FOR SHIPMENT TO USSR. 2,400 TONS PEANUTS WERE ALSO TO BE LOADED IN CONJUNCTION WITH 1972 AGREEMENT CALLING FOR EXPORT 5,000 TONS PEANUTS TO USSR. SALVAT IS REPORTEDLY ONLY SHIP NOW IN BOMBAY HARBOR SCHEDULED TAKE ON FOOD COMMODITIES. ABOUT 1,500 TONS OF PEANUTS ALREADY LOADED WHEN BOYCOTT BEGAN.

3. BOYCOTT DREW QUICK CRITICISM IN PARLIAMENT FROM GOI MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING, RAJ BAHADUR. MINISTER ARGUED LUXURY ITEMS SUCH AS TABLE NUTS AND HIGH QUALITY BASMATI RICE WERE NOT A PART OF NORMAL INDIAN DIET. A TON OF EXPORTED BASMATI RICE WOULD BRING THREE TONS OF FOREIGN WHEAT. HE DEFENDED THE PEANUT EXPORT TO THE USSR AS FULFILLING A CONTRACT SIGNED AND AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND A POTENTIALLY LUCRATIVE FOREIGN TRADE MARKET. HE CLAIMED INDIA COULD BUY EDIBLE OIL FROM THE EXCHANGE EARNED FROM THE PEANUT EXPORTS, BUT LATER ADMITTED THAT THE EXPORT OF PEANUTS TO USSR IS AGAINST RUPEE PAYMENTS AND NO EDIBLE OIL HAS BEEN IMPORTED FROM THE USSR TO DATE.

4. ON AUGUST 6, PROBABLY AS RESULT OF GOI URGINGS, KULKARNI ANNOUNCED AIPDWF WOULD ALLOW SALVAT TAKE ON PEANUT BUT NOT RICE CARGO. RICE BOYCOTT, KULKARNI EMPHASIZED, WOULD CONTINUE INDEFINITELY.

5. DESPITE KULKARNI'S ANNOUNCEMENT, BPTEU'S CRANE AND BARGE OPERATORS CONTINUING BOYCOTT. REGISTERING AN INDEPENDENT STAND, BPTEU ISSUED AUGUST 7 PRESS RELEASE STATING, QUOTE THE DECISION OF BPT EMPLOYEES UNION TO BOYCOTT THE RUSSIAN SHIP SALVAT CARRYING GROUNDNUT KERNELS TO PORT ODESSA IN USSR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 NEW DE 09616 181012Z

HAS NOT BEEN CHANGED BY THE UNION AS THE GOVERNMENT CLARIFICATION IN THIS REGARD IS NOT COMING FORTH UNQUOTE. BPTEU OFFICIALS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL NOT PERMIT SALVAT TO LEAVE BOMBAY PORT UNTIL BOYCOTT IS LIFTED.

6. ON AUGUST 16, GOI MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING, RAJ BAHADUR, VISITED BOMBAY FOR TALKS WITH BPTEU PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS (R) POLITICIAN, SHANTI PATEL. ACCORDING TO

THE BPTEU GENERAL SECRETARY, PATEL TOLD BAHADUR BOYCOTT WOULD BE LIFTED IF GOI GIVES PUBLIC, PREFERABLY WRITTEN, ASSURANCES THAT (A) STRIKE WAS IN QUOTE NATIONAL INTEREST UNQUOTE, AND (B) IF LOADED, SALVAT PEANUT CARGO WILL BRING SPECIFIC QUANTIFIED RETURNS FORM OF FOOD IMPORTS OR FOREIGN EXCHANGE WHICH WILL MORE THAN OFFSET VALUE EXPORTED PEANUTS. GENERAL SECRETARY PREDICTED TO CONGEN OFFICER AUGUST 16 THAT GOI WILL SHORTLY PRODUCE SUCH ASSURANCES FOLLOWING CABINET LEVEL CONSULTATIONS.

7. COMMENT. BPTEU DECISION CONTINUE BOYCOTT LINKED TO POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC CAUSES. BPTEU PRESIDENT SHANTI PATEL IS EX-CONGRESS (O) POLITICIAN, A FORMER MAYOR OF BOMBAY AND EX-PRESIDENT OF HIND MAZDOOR SABHA, INDIA'S LARGEST LABOR GROUP. HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF BPCC. PATEL JOINED CONGRESS (R) BANDWAGON FOLLOWING HIS 1971 DEFEAT FOR LOK SABHA SEAT ON CONGRESS (O) TICKET. HIS CONGRESS (R) MOORINGS HAVE NEVER BEEN SECURE. AT BPCC FORUM IN RECENT MONTHS HE HAS BEEN OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF RAJNI PATEL, BPCC PRESIDENT AND PROTEGE OF PRIME MINISTER. HIS IGNORING OF GOI PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED OPPOSITION TO SALVAT BOYCOTT IS PROBABLY CONNECTED WITH READING OF 1973 EROSION OF CONGRESS (R) POSITION IN BOMBAY AREA AND A DESIRE TO CARVE OUT GREATER INDEPENDENT AREA OF INFLUENCE BOMBAY DOCKS AT KULKARNI'S EXPENSE. KULKARNI CLAIMS TO BE POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT BUT HAS TIES TO CONGRESS (R) THROUGH HIS TWO SENIOR COLLEAGUES IN THE TDWU, BOTH ACTIVE CONGRESS (R) MEMBERS. PATEL'S SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT KEEP SALVAT BOYCOTT GOING HAS ENHANCED HIS PRESTIGE BOMBAY POLITICAL SCENE. BOYCOTT ALSO PROVIDES ONE MORE ILLUSTRATION GROWING FISSURES OCNGRESS (R) UNITY IN BOMBAY AREA.

BANE

UNQUOTE

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MOYNIHAN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Reason:
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